1: Titiev E-5 (1948) 1951 SG4 Araucanians SG4
Mapuche-Huilliche

THE LIFE CYCLE. II. ADOLESCENCE TO DEATH

PREMARITAL SEX CUSTOMS[1]

WHEN a youth achieves adulthood, he is given much advice by older men. He is cautioned not to overindulge in sexual activity, but he is by no means urged to remain celibate until married. Young women, similarly, are taught not to offer themselves too freely, but they are not told to cherish virginity, except in the case of Christian families. Masturbation is said to be indulged in by boys, but, although some informants felt that the practice is increasing, all agreed that it is not widespread. Homosexuality is reported to be moderately common among young girls in the spring. According to a typical native opinion expressed during a discussion, these habits indicate that such youngsters are ready to be married. Berdaches, pederasts, and sodomists are not infrequently mentioned in the literature, particularly in conjunction with shamanism;[2] but little was said or known about these practices at present. One informant did volunteer the statement that sodomy with ewes was becoming fairly common, and he attributed its origin to the Argentine, where, he claimed, the act was performed with female llamas. On the whole sodomy is considered dangerous and likely to cause disease, but bachelors observed in the act are simply advised to get married.

A girl with a high mound of Venus is considered particularly attractive. It is conventional for men to seek out and choose as mistresses or wives such girls as they find desirable, but women are not supposed to take the initiative in selecting lovers. When a man finds an opportunity for intercourse he acts promptly. There is no anticipatory fondling or "petting" and not much time is devoted to preliminaries.[3] Consummation

[1] This section comprises material obtained from several informants, of whom the principal one was J. M. Collío.

[2] Latcham, 1924, p. 629–30.

[3] One old-time polygynist, who had observed the conventional politeness and deference of Euro-American males, expressed wonder that they ever succeeded in gaining possession of a woman.

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matters will be discussed between husband and wife, the wife outlining her plans to her husband and the husband agreeing or disagreeing as he sees fit. His disagreement, though, does not end the matter, for the wife is at liberty to dispose of what are considered her rightful possessions, even though her husband may hold a different opinion. It is the husband's place to make countersuggestions if he disagrees with his wife's proposals, but he seldom feels himself in a strong enough position to actually forbid her to act without restraint. Families in which husbands rule with an iron hand live in an atmosphere of discord which eventually comes to the attention of the community. Social pressures tend to restore a measure of harmony, at least after a crisis has been reached, since a husband is subject to certain ridicule if his wife complains about his actions to other women and derives sympathy from them. A man will, therefore, usually accede to a number of his wife's wishes if for no other reason than to keep the dissension from extending beyond his immediate family, to maintain at least the fiction of a well-ordered household. On the other hand, a nagging wife does not gain the sympathy of her housemates or neighbors, and it is the husband whose complaints or recourse to physical violence are sanctioned. A shrewish wife is sometimes regarded as *wesa* or *loca* (crazy).

After the spouses settle down to gaining a living and begetting children, there seems to be a noticeable de-emphasis of the romantic emotions which characterize early matrimony. While courtship behavior is notoriously secretive, the early marital period, before the birth of the first child, is one in which affection between husband and wife is often openly displayed in the presence of others. This relationship seems to undergo a marked change after the first child is born, but since I have seen only a few such cases my remarks are wholly impressionistic.

There seems to be no stigma attached to excessive virility in extramarital affairs or a lack of it in regard to familial sex. Indeed, the ideal male performance may be characterized as *machoismo*, or masculinity, in the Ladino sense with the full implication of promiscuity. Women may be ridiculed for displaying what is considered an overinterest in sex, indicated by their conversation and by their attentions to their husbands. There is the notion that a sexually "overactive" wife is given to looseness, an accusation sometimes made in arguments with other women.

Philandering brings no more than mild social rebuke, provided

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595 589 968 riage, this assertion being a sensitive one in the face of inquiry by non-Mapuche, but that after the polygynist's death one of the older sons would assume responsibility for the support of the widows and their children. Some of the secondary wives said they would return to their natal reservations after their husband's death, provided there would be more land for them there than they were entitled to under the present polygynous arrangement or through their sons' inheritance.

595 Curiously, in almost all instances the polygynists had a smaller acreage than other families on the same reservation with only half the number of members. By and large, they were relatively poor men. [554] They apparently gained no prestige by having multiple wives and were economically pressed to support their many dependents. I do [831] not attempt to explain their adherence to polygyny in terms of lust, as [837] the Mapuche are inclined to do, since there are many opportunities for sexual gratification outside of marriage. Nor do I think that to say they are culturally conservative adds to our knowledge, although these polygynists seem to fit into this category.

[596] [594] Compound families without polygynous attributes are much more simply structured than those in which there are multiple wives. In terms of interpersonal relationships among family members there is little to distinguish these households from elementary families. It is, however, in the matter of inheritance among the half-siblings that complications arise from which tensions might result as the children become older.

595 418 [613] When the children are related through the father and therefore are all members of the same lineage, matters of inheritance proceed along expected lines. Sharing of farmland is roughly equal among brothers who are able to engage in adult labors. There is always some arrangement whereby land is held in trust for the younger sons. Often the second wife has jurisdiction over the management of land after her husband's death. If the older sons of the first wife (deceased) feel that [169] it will be a long time before they can inherit parcels of land which will enable them to marry and establish their own households, they tend to leave the reservation altogether and enter Ladino society. This kind of situation sometimes results in the youngest son of the secondary wife inheriting all or most of the father's land.

[612] [618] [587] When a widower with children marries a woman with children of her own, the situation is more complicated both as regards inheritance and with respect to interpersonal relations within the household

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833 Although the amount of privacy varies from one household to the next, depending on household composition and living arrangements, 864 it is never great. If any youngster is in doubt about the nature of the sexual act, or makes a remark indicating his ignorance, he is put straight by one of the older boys or girls of the group, usually after prolonged teasing.

831 Sexual intercourse is regarded as a natural part of courtship. Court- [836] ship itself is called *thungun* or *kintun*, words which connote sexual [584] activity as well. They are sometimes used in reference to sexuality among stock animals and domesticated cats and dogs which after [512] mating are said to be married. Other rude parallels between human and animal sexual behavior are also noted and considered humorous. [595] A rutting bullock, for example, might be called a polygynist or a wealthy man for having so many "wives," and polygyny is generally associated with male concupiscence. It is interesting that stock ani- [231] mals, aside from being the subject of much discussion because of their [561] economic and prestige value, actually provide a focus for the deliberation of sexual matters which offsets a reluctance to talk openly about human sexuality under conditions where respect should be maintained toward members of the proximate ascending generation.

881 Parents do not inform young children about sex and its functions 864 and, indeed, there seems no appreciable difference in this knowledge [831] between adolescents and their elders. Fathers counsel their adolescent sons more about honor and adult responsibilities, vaguely preparatory to their marriage, and will lay down the law regarding incest, but very little information about sexual functions passes directly from father to son. Mothers usually advise their daughters at the onset of their first menses with regard to bodily cleanliness and the care of soiled garments, but again little or nothing about sexual activity is transmitted from mother to unmarried daughter.

Hence, young people acquire their knowledge of sex through observation and direct experience. During this process they are under [831] the censorship of their parents. There is the notion that sexual desire should not be overindulged, but it is difficult to obtain a clear statement about the limits of indulgence. Premarital sexual activity is [836] expected to begin at about the onset of puberty, though parents restrict their children's opportunities for sexuality in an attempt to keep it within respectable bounds.

835 The incest barrier is theoretically immutable and its transgression unthinkable. Yet there is not complete agreement on all the relation-